

Two specimens from Fort Verde, Arizona, in the collection of Dr. Mearns agree closely with the Lower California birds in the color of the wings and the character of the dorsal spotting, but in other respects they are intermediate between the Lower California and Eastern birds.

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

Slater's Catalogue of the Tracheophonæ.\*—The Tracheophone passerines, as is well-known, are restricted to the warmer parts of the two American continents, being for the most part tropical in their distribution. They comprise the four families Dendrocolaptidæ, Formicariidæ, Conopophagidæ, and Pteroptochidæ, and differ from other Passeres in the peculiar modification of the lower end of the trachea for the production of vocal sounds. They are birds of mostly small size, the largest not much exceeding the stature of a Jay, the average size being that of a small Thrush. They vary greatly in form and habits, and are mostly denizens of the thicket or the forest. Many of the Dendrocolaptidæ resemble the Tree-creepers in form and habits, having stiffened spiny tails and the same manner of life. Other forms of the same family are terrestrial, and are remarkable for the large domed clay nests they construct, from which they derive the name of Oven-birds. The Formicariidæ are likewise very variable in form, some of them being decidedly Shrike-like, while others are more like Thrushes and Warblers, and still others, as regards external form, recall the Pittas of the Old World. The Pteroptochidæ may be compared to gigantic Wrens.

In the present volume 559 species are recognized, of which 271 belong to the Dendrocolaptidæ, 256 to the Formicariidæ, 11 to the Conopophagidæ, and 21 to the Pteroptochidæ. Of these 531 are represented in the British Museum collection, the number of specimens aggregating 4482. Many other species are referred to in foot-notes, which, says the author, "may ultimately turn out to be perfectly valid," only such species as the author has *seen* being, as a rule, admitted!

The style of treatment is the same as in the same author's previous volumes of the series, noticed in former numbers of this journal. The

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\*Catalogue | of the | Passeriformes, | or | Perching Birds | in the | Collection | of the | British Museum. | — | Tracheophonæ, | or the Families | Dendrocolaptidæ, | Formicariidæ, | Conopophagidæ, and Pteroptochidæ. | By | Philip Lutley Slater. | London: | Printed by order of the Trustees. | 1890.—8vo, pp. xviii X 372, pll. xx. (Volume XV of the 'Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum.')

author states that "his work has no claims to be called a monograph, but is simply a catalogue of species and specimens, which it is hoped, however, may tend towards the elucidation of a very difficult subject by future laborers." Its utility will certainly prove almost beyond estimate, even to those who may not be prepared to agree fully to all of the conclusions presented. In such obscure and difficult groups as are here treated, opinion must vary on many points, being influenced by the amount of material in hand and the standpoint from which it is viewed.

In comparing the present volume with the 'Nomenclator Avium Neotropicalium' of Sclater and Salvin, published in 1874, it is of interest to note that the number of species now recognized for the Tracheophona has increased about twenty-five per cent in sixteen years, there being about 120 species added in the present volume that were not included in the 'Nomenclator.' Of these about 75 have been described since the publication of the 'Nomenclator', while nearly 50 then ignored are now given place as probably valid species. The number of genera has proportionately increased, and about in the same ratio as regards the recognition of generic groups formerly ignored. Of the nearly 90 species referred to only in foot-notes, probably one half to two thirds will prove to be recognizable forms, while many of those now registered as species will doubtless take rank eventually as merely local races or subspecies.

Species described as new or re-named are the following: (1) *Thamnophilus puncticeps*, p. 212; (2) *Myrmotherula inornata* (Berlepsch, MS.), p. 243; (3) *Cercomacra hypoleuca*, p. 268; (4) *Myrmeciza felzelui*, p. 283; (5) *Grallaria nigro-lineata* (Berlepsch, MS.), p. 321; (6) *Liosceles erythicus*, p. 345. A new genus is *Thamnocharis* (p. 310).

As regards matters of nomenclature, we regret to see that the law of priority is not always respected, as when, in several cases, an earlier name, based on the female sex, is rejected for a later one based on the male; or when, as in the case of *Formicarius cayennensis* Bodd. (p. 302), a much used early name is rejected, because indicating "a wrong locality," for an uncurrent later name.

In conclusion we cannot do less than tender hearty thanks, in behalf of ornithologists at large, to the accomplished author of the volume under notice for the great service he has rendered in marshalling one of the most difficult sub-orders among birds into an orderly array.—J. A. A.

**Allen on Birds from Quito.**—The collection upon which this paper\* is based was "made in the immediate vicinity of Quito by M. L. Söderström," and "numbers 210 specimens, representing 79 species, one of which proved to be new." A list is given of all the species contained in the collection, many of them accompanied by critical remarks having reference to questions of synonymy or relationship, those thus discussed being as follows:—

\* Notes on a Collection of Birds from Quito, Ecuador. By J. A. Allen. Bull. American Museum Nat. Hist., Vol. II, No. 2, March, 1889, Art. VI, pp. 69-76.